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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COURT OF APPEALS

No. 14-BG-850

IN RE LATHAL PONDER, JR., RESPONDENT.

A Suspended Member of the Bar of the
District of Columbia Court of Appeals
(Bar Registration No. 434951)

On Report and Recommendation of the
Board on Professional Responsibility
(BDNs 61-12, 148-12, 177-12, 206-12, & 233-12)

(Submitted April 21, 2015)

Decided May 21, 2015)

Before BECKWITH and MCLEESE, *Associate Judges*, and NEBEKER, *Senior Judge*.

PER CURIAM: Having found by clear and convincing evidence that respondent, Lathal Ponder, Jr., violated District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct 1.1(a)-(b), 1.3(a)-(b), 1.4 (a)-(b), 1.5 (b)-(c), 1.16 (d), 8.1 (a)-(b), 8.4 (b)-(d) as well as D.C. Bar R. XI, § 2 (b)(3), the Board on Professional Responsibility (“the Board”) recommended that respondent be disbarred from the practice of law in the District of Columbia. The Board found that respondent, among other professional misconduct, failed to provide diligent and competent representation to multiple clients, intentionally failed to pursue the lawful objectives of his clients,

failed to keep his clients reasonably informed, and engaged in “dishonesty of a flagrant kind” toward both his clients and Bar Counsel. Neither respondent nor Bar Counsel filed an exception to the Board’s recommendation.

Under District of Columbia Bar Rule XI, § 9 (h)(1), when no exceptions are filed to the Board’s report, and the Board’s recommended sanction imposes a fitness requirement, we conduct an independent review of the recommended discipline. Nonetheless, under such circumstances, our review is “especially deferential.” *In re Rogers*, No. 13-BG-1503, 2015 WL 1471181, at *1 (D.C. Apr. 2, 2015) (per curiam). Assuming without deciding that similar review is required when no exceptions are filed to a recommendation of disbarment, we have reviewed the record and conclude that the Board’s findings of fact are supported by substantial evidence of record, and its recommended disposition is warranted.

Accordingly, respondent Lathal Ponder, Jr., is hereby disbarred from the practice of law in the District of Columbia effective thirty days from the date of this opinion. For purposes of reinstatement, the disbarment shall run from the date on which he filed the affidavit required by District of Columbia Bar Rule XI, § 14 (g). Respondent must demonstrate fitness to practice law prior to reinstatement.

We direct respondent's attention to the responsibilities of disbarred attorneys set forth in District of Columbia Bar Rule XI, §§ 14 and 16.

So ordered.